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Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 01547 241136Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-08 CIAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9521

UNCLAS SEOUL 1547

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OEXC, ETRN, KS
SUBJECT: TRAVEL OF KOREAN MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS

REF: 78 SEOUL 375

1. MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION IS GRATEFUL FOR THE MATERIALS FORWARDED UNDER COVER OF FEB 6 LETTER FROM DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS OPERATIONS, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

2. MOT INTEREST IS IN SAFETY PROGRAMS FOR ALL FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION, AND FOR THAT REASON MOT IS SENDING TWO OF ITS OFFICIALS TO THE UNITED STATES FOR THREE WEEKS BEGINNING MARCH 17.

3. THE OFFICIALS WILL ARRIVE IN WASHINGTON ON MARCH 19 AND WISH TO TALK WITH DOT OFFICIALS ABOUT THE MANNER IN WHICH THE MOT CAN GO ABOUT IMPROVING ITS PRESENT SAFETY STANDARDS AND BEGINNING NEW PROGRAMS WHERE THEY ARE NECESSARY. AS MENTIONTD, THESE OFFICIALS, ONE FROM THE MOT AND ONE FROM THE KOREAN NATIONAL RAILROAD, WISH TO DISCUSS ALL ASPECTS OF SAFETY YR ALL FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION: LAND, WATER AND AIR.

4. WE REALIZE THAT THERE ARE MANY AND VARIED USG SAFETY STANDARDS AND PROGRAMS AND WE HAVE SUGGESTED TO THEMOT THAT
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PERHAPS THESE OFFICIALS SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON DETERMINING WHAT PROGRAMS KOREA SHOULD BE CONCERNED WITH HAVING IMMEDIATELY, HOW TO PUT THE PROGRAMS INTO EFFECT, THE ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK REQUIRED FOR PROGRAMS AND HOW TO PLAN THE INTRODUCTION OF FURTHER PROGRAMS. WE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE MOT MAY WANT TO LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF A REIMBURSABLE TECHNICAL SERVICE PROGRAM WITH DOT OR A SIMILAR CONTRACT WITH AN

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AMERICAN COMSULTANT.

4. THE IRI ACCIDENT IS SYMPTOMATIC THE PAUCITY OF SAFETY, BOTH STANDARDS AND PREVENTIVE PROGRAMS, WHICH EXISTS IN KOREA. WE BELIEVE WE WOULD BE DOING KOREA AN INESTIMABLE SERVICE BY SUPPORTING AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE THE IMPROVEMENT OF SAFETY AND INCREASING THE AWARENESS OF ITS NECESSITY. WE SEE COMMERCIAL POSSIBILITIES AS WELL.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: IT IS REQUESTED THAT THE DOT SET UP A SCHEDULE FOR THE MOT OFFICIALS. THE ONLY PRIOR COMMITMENT THEY HAVE IS TO VISIT THE NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL IN CHICAGO, WHICH THE MOT HAS JUST JOINED AND CONTACTED DIRECTLY. NO FIRM DATE HAS BEEN SET WITH THE NSC. THERE IS NO FLEXIBILITY AS TO TIME OF DEPARTURE IN THE MOT SCHEDULE. WE WILL IDENTIFY AND PROVIDE BIO DATA FOR THE OFFICIALS AS SOON AS WE ARE GIVEN THE INFORMATION. MOT REQUESTS THAT A RESERVATION FOR A DOUBLE ROOM AT A MODERATELY PRICED HOTEL BE MADE. WE RECOMMEND THAT COMMERCE ALSO BE INFORMED OF THIS VISIT.
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